

IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 5977

Today, this legislative body sits at the edge of a great precipice.

Today under the veil of “matters of the state” this legislative body seeks to impose a biased and horrific interpretation of the Michigan Constitution on local jurisdictions.

Today this legislative body seeks to elevate itself as “Lord and Master” over the affairs of local jurisdictions.

Today this legislative body would assume the mantle of Imperial Rule as to how the residents of local jurisdictions through the powers of their constitutionally authorized and dully elected officials can implement ordinances, resolutions, and agreements that are in their best interests.

HB 5977 would dictate the terms and conditions under which local governments must operate with respect to the employment considerations in the development of property encompassed by and under the governance of that local government.

With this bill the question that begs to be asked is what then is the purpose of counties, townships, municipalities and villages? Are they simply names of geographical areas that have no purpose when it comes to development other than to sign off on development law from the State? Are local elected officials to have no say on local development as it relates to the best interests of their residents?

Is development in Bad Axe to be completely outside of its’ local residents control? Is Holland to have the same development conditions as Mendon? Should the land in and around Baraga be developed in the same manner has the land in and around Cheboygan? Why then is it that when local governments such as Detroit or Flint or Grand Rapids seek to implement unique strategies in development of property under their jurisdiction that it becomes “matters of the state?”

As Michigan residents we enjoy a plethora of natural beauty, mixed cultures, and localities unique in and of themselves. We enjoy this bounty because we have abhorred the “cookie-cutter” approach to the development within local jurisdictions.

I for one do not believe for one instance that the average Michigan citizen believes that they are better served by a one-size fits all employment policy as it related to local development.

The powers of the state must be carefully exercised. How many sitting in this chamber talk with disdain about the influence and control of federal government over state affairs yet now are ready to vote to force state control over the development strategies of local jurisdictions?

Have we forgotten what the term “We the People” embodies? Are we so aloof that rather than to take time to fully research and consider the possible ramifications of a bill we just throw a few sentences together and say this is in the best interest of “We the People”?

I for one feel that we are failing our State when we do not take time and give careful consideration to policies that can have dramatic impact and effect on the places and people that make this such a great state to live in. We must not implement the policy because we are about to leave office and want to make our “mark.” This is not the how people are best governed.

Think very carefully about what it means to tell local jurisdictions that you can no longer work with local developers and contractors to implement unique development strategies and opportunities that will benefit the people living where the development takes place.

This is a bad bill (reminiscent of the Driver Responsibility Bill) where one size fits all. We are not a one size jurisdiction state. We must not surrender local initiative and innovation as “matters of the state.” If our local jurisdictions are to flourish let us make sure they have the latitude to do so.

I urge you to think carefully and consider the long term impacts of one size fits all. If you do I am sure you will join me in the vote to oppose HB 5977.

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